

Across the Plains: Sara Royce's Western Narrative

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Across the Plains: Sara Royce's Western Narrative, edited by Jennifer Dawes Adkison. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. vii, 128 pp. Photo, map, notes, index. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer J. Thomas Murphy is associate professor of history at Bemidji State University. His dissertation (University of Illinois, 1993) was "Pistols Legacy: Sutlers, Post Traders, and the American Army, 1820–1895."

On the morning of April 30, 1849, Sarah Royce and her husband, Josiah, tucked their two-year-old daughter into a wagon and set off from Tipton, Iowa, for the gold fields of California. They started late in the season, so every setback, whether from illness or a difficult river crossing, increased the likelihood of dying in a snow-drifted mountain pass. In the Nevada desert, dead cattle and abandoned wagons lined the trail, and Sarah imagined her small company as "the last, feeble, struggling band at the rear of a routed army" (61). Trudging on, they owed their survival to a relief party coming from California and soldiers marching westward. Happy to be in the "Promised Land," the Royces lived in a series of mining camps where Josiah operated grocery stores and Sarah occasionally taught school. In 1873 they moved to Oakland, where, 11 years later, Sarah began a narrative of her experiences.

Sarah's story is often cited in studies of the overland trail, but initially, her son, Josiah Jr., wanted the memoir as confirmation that his history of California linked the state to a national destiny. Sarah obliged with a self-satisfying portrayal of hardiness and pluck tempered by domesticity and guided by religious faith. Jennifer Dawes Adkison, a literary scholar, transcribed the original manuscript, including text excised from earlier printings, and supplied informative notes and a timeline of Sarah's life. This, along with an insightful introduction, clarifies the intent of Sarah's narrative and shows how constructed memories inform our history.

One Hundred Summers: A Kiowa Calendar Record, by Candace S. Greene. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. xvii, 263 pp. Illustrations, glossary, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Greg Olson is Curator of Exhibits and Special Projects at the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City. He is the author of *The Ioway in Missouri* (2008).

There was a time when those who wrote about the history of American Indians believed that Indian people themselves had left us little important information about the past. Many European American historians operated under the assumption that the historical information that native people had carefully recorded in decorative arts, oral tradi-